

# Requirements for the Grains/Bread Component of the Summer Food Service Program Meal Patterns

This document provides guidance on meeting the meal pattern and crediting requirements for the grains/breads component of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) [Summer Food Service Program \(SFSP\) meal patterns](#). For information on the SFSP meal patterns and the grains/breads component, visit the "[SFSP Meal Patterns](#)" and "[Grains/Breads Component for the SFSP](#)" sections of the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) SFSP webpage.

## Meal Pattern Requirements

The SFSP meal patterns require one serving of the grains/breads component at breakfast, lunch, and supper. One serving of the grains/breads component may be offered as one of the two required snack components. For guidance on the required amounts for one serving, refer to "[Serving Size](#)" in this document.

## Allowable Foods

The grains/breads component includes a wide variety of foods, such as:

- breads, biscuits, bagels, rolls, tortillas, and muffins;
- snack products, such as crackers (including animal crackers and graham crackers), hard pretzels, hard bread sticks, tortilla chips, and popcorn;
- grain-based desserts, such as cookies, granola bars, cereal bars, cake, and pastries;
- cereal grains, such as buckwheat, brown rice, bulgur, and quinoa;
- ready-to-eat (RTE) breakfast cereals;
- cooked breakfast cereals (instant and regular), such as oatmeal;
- bread products used as an ingredient in another menu item, such as combination foods, e.g., breading on fish or poultry and pizza crust in pizza; and
- pasta products, such as macaroni, spaghetti, noodles, orzo, and couscous.



To credit as the grains/breads component in the SFSP meal patterns, grain products and recipes must be made with creditable grains. Creditable grains for the SFSP include whole grains, enriched grains, bran, and germ.

Grain foods vary in nutrition content. For best nutrition, SFSP menus should offer whole grains most often, and limit grain-based desserts.

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## Required Crediting Documentation

SFSP sponsors must be able to document the meal pattern contribution of all grain products and recipes used for SFSP meals and snacks. Menu planners should use the USDA's [Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs](#) (FBG) to determine food yields and crediting information for grain menu items.

### Commercial products

Acceptable documentation includes the product's Child Nutrition (CN) label (available only for main dish entrees that contribute to the meat/meat alternates component) or a product formulation statement (PFS) from the manufacturer. A PFS is required for commercial products when any of the following situations apply:

- a creditable grain is not the first ingredient, but the product contains more than one creditable grain;
- a combination food that contains a grain portion is not CN labeled, e.g., pizza, breaded chicken nuggets, and battered fish;
- the manufacturer claims that the product's serving size is less than the required weight or volume in the USDA's chart, [Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs](#) (refer to "Serving Size" in this document); or
- the product is not listed in the USDA's Exhibit A chart.

For additional guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Calculation Methods for Grains/Breads Servings in the SFSP](#).

The PFS must indicate the amount of creditable grains per serving and demonstrate how the product provides that amount according to the USDA's regulations, guidance, or policy. SFSP sponsors must verify the accuracy of the product's PFS prior to including the product in reimbursable meals and must maintain all crediting documentation on file. The CSDE will review this information during the Administrative Review of the SFSP.

If the manufacturer will not supply a PFS, or the PFS does not provide the appropriate documentation, the product cannot credit as the grains/breads component in SFSP meals and snacks.

For more information on crediting documentation for the SFSP meal patterns, refer to the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) resources, [Product Formulation Statements and Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labeling Program](#), and [Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the SFSP](#); the

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USDA's *Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Grains/ Breads Servings in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, Summer Food Service Program, and NSLP Afterschool Snacks* and *Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement*; and visit the "Crediting Commercial Processed Products" section of the CSDE's SFSP webpage.

## Foods made from scratch

For all foods prepared from scratch, SFSP sponsors must have a recipe that documents the crediting information per serving. For example, to credit macaroni and cheese as one serving of the grains/breads component, the recipe must indicate that each serving contains  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of whole-grain or enriched pasta.

The USDA encourages SFSP sponsors to use standardized recipes whenever possible. For more information, refer to the CSDE's *Standardized Recipe Form for the SFSP* and visit the "Standardized Recipes" section of the CSDE's SFSP webpage.

## Crediting Requirements

Grain products and recipes must meet specific criteria to credit as the grains/breads component in the SFSP meal patterns. The guidance below addresses the crediting requirements for grains/breads.

### Creditable grains

Grain and breads must be whole grain, enriched, or contain a blend of whole and enriched grains. Bran and germ credit the same as enriched and whole grains. Products that are 100 percent whole grain, such as whole-wheat bread and brown rice, provide the best nutrition and should be served most often. For information on how to identify creditable grains, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Crediting Whole Grains in the SFSP* and *Crediting Enriched Grains in the SFSP*.

### Crediting breakfast cereals

Cooked and ready-to-eat (RTE) breakfast cereals must be whole grain, enriched, or fortified. The minimum serving for RTE breakfast cereals is  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup or 1 ounce, whichever is less. The minimum serving for cooked breakfast cereals is  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup cooked or 25 grams dry. For best nutrition, choose whole-grain, low-sugar cereals. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the SFSP*.

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## Crediting corn masa, masa harina, corn flour, and cornmeal

Corn ingredients credit as the grains/breads component if they are whole grain, enriched, or nixtamalized. Nixtamalization is a process in which dried corn is soaked and cooked in an alkaline (slaked lime) solution. This process increases the bioavailability of certain nutrients and provides a nutritional profile similar to whole-grain corn.

Ingredients labeled as hominy, corn masa, or masa harina are nixtamalized, and therefore credit as whole grains. The ingredients statements below show some examples of nixtamalized products.

- Ingredients: *Corn masa flour*, water, contains 2% or less of: cellulose gum, guar gum, amylase, propionic acid, benzoic acid, and phosphoric acid (to maintain freshness).
- Ingredients: *Whole-white corn*, vegetable oil (contains soybean, corn, cottonseed, and/or sunflower oil), salt, *lime/calcium hydroxide* (processing aid). **Note:** The lime/calcium hydroxide is the processing aid for the nixtamalization of corn.

For more information, refer to [USDA Memo SP 34-2019](#), [CACFP 15-2019](#) and [SFSP 15-2019](#): *Crediting Coconut, Hominy, Corn Masa, and Masa Harina in the Child Nutrition Programs*.

## Crediting grain-based desserts

The CSDE's *Servings for Grains/Breads in the SFSP* identifies allowable grain-based desserts with footnote 1 (allowed only at snack) or footnote 2 (allowed only at breakfast and snack). Examples of grain-based desserts include brownies, cookies, cakes, cupcakes, coffee cakes, cinnamon streusel quick breads, piecrusts in sweet pies (e.g., apple, coconut, blueberry, and pecan), cinnamon rolls, doughnuts, cereal bars, granola bars, breakfast bars, sweet rolls, pastries, toaster pastries, sweet scones (e.g., blueberry, raisin, and orange cranberry), rice pudding, and sweet bread pudding.

Most grain-based desserts are high in fat, added sugars, and sodium. The CSDE recommends limiting grain-based desserts to no more than twice per week, between all meals and snacks served in the SFSP. For example, a SFSP menu that offers cookies at snack on Monday and granola bars at lunch on Thursday should not include any other grain-based desserts that week.

## Crediting hominy

Hominy is made from whole kernels of maize (dried field corn) that have been soaked in an alkaline solution (nixtamalized). Milled hominy credits as the grains/breads component. Hominy offered in a dried, milled form (such as grits) credits as a whole grain. A ½-cup cooked or 25 grams dry credits as one serving of the grains/breads component.

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In its whole form, hominy credits as a starchy vegetable. For information on crediting hominy as the vegetables/fruits component, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Requirements for the Vegetables/Fruits Component of the SFSP Meal Patterns](#).

### Crediting popcorn

Popcorn credits as a whole-grain food. Three cups (1 ounce) of plain popped popcorn credit as one serving of the grains/breads component. The minimum creditable amount is  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup ( $\frac{1}{4}$  serving). Table 1 summarizes the grains/breads contribution of popped popcorn.

Table 1. Grains contribution of popped popcorn		
Cups (popped)	Weight (popped)	Grains/breads contribution
$\frac{3}{4}$ cup	0.25 ounces or 7 grams	$\frac{1}{4}$ serving (minimum creditable amount)
$1\frac{1}{2}$ cups	0.5 ounces or 14 grams	$\frac{1}{2}$ serving
$2\frac{1}{4}$ cups	0.75 ounces or 21 grams	$\frac{3}{4}$ serving
3 cups	1 ounce or 28 grams	1 serving

Menu planners should consider the appropriateness of the serving size. It may be unreasonable to provide the full serving of the grains/breads component from popcorn, due to the large volume required for crediting. The CSDE recommends providing a smaller serving of popcorn and supplementing with another food from the grains/breads component. For example, a snack mix that contains  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups of popcorn ( $\frac{1}{2}$  serving) and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of enriched or WGR round cereal ( $\frac{1}{2}$  serving) credits as one serving of the grains/breads component.



SFSP sponsors must maintain crediting documentation for foods that contain popcorn as an ingredient, such as a popcorn snack mix (refer to “[Required Crediting Documentation](#)” in this document). Crediting information for popcorn is summarized in [USDA Memo SP 23-2019, CACFP 10-2019](#) and [SFSP 9-2019: Crediting Popcorn in the Child Nutrition Programs](#).

Popcorn may be a choking hazard for young children. Consider children's ages and developmental readiness when deciding whether to offer popcorn in SFSP menus. For additional guidance, visit the “[Choking Prevention](#)” section of the CSDE's [Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

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## Noncreditable grains/breads

Examples of foods that do not credit include but are not limited to commercial products that do not contain a creditable grain as the first ingredient; breakfast cereals (RTE and cooked) that are not whole grain, enriched, or fortified; and recipes that are not made with creditable grains. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Noncreditable Foods in the SFSP](#).

## Serving Size

The required amount for the SFSP grains/breads component is in servings. The amount of a grain food that provides one serving varies because different types of foods contain different amounts of creditable grains. For example, to credit as one serving of the grains/breads component, a roll must weigh 25 grams (0.9 ounce), a corn muffin must weigh 31 grams (1.1 ounces), and a blueberry muffin must weigh 50 grams (1.8 ounces). The minimum amount that credits toward the grains/breads component is  $\frac{1}{4}$  serving.

The USDA allows two methods for determining the servings of a creditable grain product or recipe. SFSP sponsors may use either method but must document how the crediting information was obtained. These methods are summarized below. For detailed guidance on both methods, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Calculation Methods for Grains/Breads Servings in the SFSP](#).

## Method 1: USDA's Exhibit A chart

Method 1 uses the USDA's chart, [Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs](#) (Exhibit A) to determine the required weight (groups A-G) or volume (groups H-I) for the grain group where the product or recipe belongs. The CSDE's resource, [Serving Sizes for Grains/Breads in the SFSP](#), lists the Exhibit A servings that apply to the SFSP meal patterns.

This method is used for commercial grain products and may also be used for standardized recipes if the menu planner knows the weight (grams or ounces) of the prepared (cooked) serving. For some commercial grain products, method 2 is required (refer to “[Commercial products](#)” in this document).

## Method 2: creditable grains

Method 2 determines the SFSP grains/breads servings from the weight (grams) of creditable grains per serving. This method is used for recipes and may also be used for commercial grain products that have a PFS stating the weight of creditable grains per serving.

To credit as one serving of the grains/breads component, grain foods in groups A-G of the USDA's Exhibit A chart must contain **14.75 grams** of creditable grains and grain foods in group H must

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contain **25 grams** of creditable grains. The grams of creditable grains must be listed in the PFS or calculated from the grain quantities in the SFSP sponsor's recipe.

### Grain crediting tools

The tools below help menu planners determine the meal pattern contribution of creditable grain products and recipes.

- **USDA's Exhibit A Grains Tool for commercial grain products:** This [online tool](#) of the USDA's *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* (FBG) determines the grains/breads servings of commercial grain products. For more information, watch the USDA's webinars, *Exhibit A Grains Tool to the Rescue* and *How to Maximize the Exhibit A Grains Tool*.
- **USDA's Recipe Analysis Workbook:** The FBG's online [Recipe Analysis Workbook](#) allows menu planners to search for ingredients, develop a standardized recipe, and determine the recipe's meal pattern contribution per serving. To access this tool, users must create a free account on the USDA's FBG website.

### Considerations for Reducing Choking Risks for Young Children

Children younger than 4 are at the highest risk of choking. Examples of grain foods that may cause choking include hard pretzels; pretzel chips; corn chips; breakfast cereals that contain nuts, whole-grain kernels (such as wheat berries), and hard chunks (such as granola); and crackers or breads with seeds, nut pieces, or whole-grain kernels.

Consider children's age and developmental readiness when deciding what types of grain foods to offer in SFSP menus; and modify foods and menus as appropriate. For additional guidance, visit the "[Choking Prevention](#)" section of the CSDE's [Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.



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## Resources

Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the SFSP (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SFSP/CreditingSFSP/Accepting\\_Processed\\_Product\\_Documentation\\_SFSP.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SFSP/CreditingSFSP/Accepting_Processed_Product_Documentation_SFSP.pdf)

Calculation Methods for Grains/Breads Servings in the SFSP (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SFSP/CreditingSFSP/Grain\\_Calculation\\_SFSP.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SFSP/CreditingSFSP/Grain_Calculation_SFSP.pdf)

Choking Prevention (CSDE's Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Food-Safety-for-Child-Nutrition-Programs/Documents#ChokingPrevention>

Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the SFSP (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SFSP/CreditingSFSP/Credit\\_Cereals\\_SFSP.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SFSP/CreditingSFSP/Credit_Cereals_SFSP.pdf)

Crediting Enriched Grains in the SFSP (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SFSP/CreditingSFSP/Credit\\_Enriched\\_Grains\\_SFSP.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SFSP/CreditingSFSP/Credit_Enriched_Grains_SFSP.pdf)

Crediting Foods in the SFSP ("Documents/Forms" section of CSDE's SFSP webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Summer-Food-Service-Program/Documents>

Crediting Summary Charts for the SFSP Meal Patterns (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SFSP/CreditingSFSP/Crediting\\_Summary\\_Charts\\_SFSP.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SFSP/CreditingSFSP/Crediting_Summary_Charts_SFSP.pdf)

Crediting Whole Grains in the SFSP (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SFSP/CreditingSFSP/Credit\\_Whole\\_Grains\\_SFSP.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SFSP/CreditingSFSP/Credit_Whole_Grains_SFSP.pdf)

Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs>

Meal Patterns for the SFSP (CSDE's SFSP webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Summer-Food-Service-Program#MealPatterns>

Noncreditable Foods in the SFSP (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SFSP/CreditingSFSP/Noncreditable\\_Foods\\_SFSP.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SFSP/CreditingSFSP/Noncreditable_Foods_SFSP.pdf)

Nutrition Guide: Summer Food Service Program (USDA):

[https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/USDA\\_SFSP\\_NutritionGuide.pdf](https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/USDA_SFSP_NutritionGuide.pdf)



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Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Grains/Breads Servings in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, Summer Food Service Program, and NSLP Afterschool Snacks (USDA):

[https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS\\_Grains-Breads\\_Servings\\_Fillable\\_508.pdf](https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Grains-Breads_Servings_Fillable_508.pdf)

Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Grains/Breads Servings in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, Summer Food Service Program, and NSLP Afterschool Snacks: Completed Sample (USDA):

[https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS\\_Samples\\_Grains\\_Breads\\_Servings.pdf](https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Samples_Grains_Breads_Servings.pdf)

Product Formulation Statements (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Product\\_Formulation\\_Statements.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Product_Formulation_Statements.pdf)

Requirements for the Grains/Breads Component of the Summer Food Service Program Meal Patterns (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SFSP/CreditingSFSP/Component\\_Grains\\_Breads\\_SFSP.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SFSP/CreditingSFSP/Component_Grains_Breads_SFSP.pdf)

Servings for Grains/Breads in the SFSP (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SFSP/MealPattern/Servings\\_Grains\\_Breads\\_SFSP.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SFSP/MealPattern/Servings_Grains_Breads_SFSP.pdf)

Standardized Recipe Form for the SFSP (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SFSP/CreditingSFSP/Standardized\\_Recipe\\_Form\\_SFSP.docx](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SFSP/CreditingSFSP/Standardized_Recipe_Form_SFSP.docx)

Standardized Recipes (“Documents/Forms” section of CSDE’s SFSP webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Summer-Food-Service-Program/Documents#StandardizedRecipes>

USDA Memo SP 23-2019, CACFP 10-2019 and SFSP 09-2019: Crediting Popcorn in the Child Nutrition Programs:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/crediting-popcorn-child-nutrition-programs>

USDA Memo SP 34-2019, CACFP 15-2019 and SFSP 15-2019: Crediting Coconut, Hominy, Corn Masa, and Masa Harina in the Child Nutrition Programs:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/crediting-coconut-hominy-corn-masa-and-masa-harina-child-nutrition-programs>

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For more information, visit the [SFSP Meal Patterns](#) and [Crediting Foods in the SFSP](#) sections of the CSDE's SFSP webpage, or contact the [Summer Meals staff](#) in the CSDE's Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841.

This document is available at [https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SFSP/CreditingSFSP/Component\\_Grains\\_Breads\\_SFSP.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SFSP/CreditingSFSP/Component_Grains_Breads_SFSP.pdf).

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Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

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